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A True

RELATION

Of the Taking of

BRISTOLL,

BY

Sir Thomas Fairfax.

Contained in a Letter written by a Gentleman of quality to his Friend in *LONDON.*

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Worthy Sir, and my noble Friend,

A Meſſenger of goods Newes is alwayes welcome; and ſo I doubt not but my Letter will be to you. I wiſh I could before this time have ſignified that happy Newes which now, through Gods great goodneſſe both to you and us, I can impart to you: yet glad I am (and it is farre more then wee unworthy wretches can deſerve from God) that I can do it now: Nor ſhall I at any time think much to beſtow that paines in relating paſſages of Gods goodneſſe, which, beſides the acceptableneſſe to thoſe who are informed by it, is no unpleaſing imployment to the Relater.

You may poſſibly have heard before my Letter comes to your hands, the happy newes of the taking of *Briſtoll* by our Forces: Yet becauſe it may bee expected by you, that I ſhould not be ſilent; I am willing, in teſtimony of my reſpects to you, to preſent you with the particulars.

I need not tell you what paſſed during the time of the ſiege, either in the Town beſieged, or in the

Army about it, becauſe, I ſuppoſe, particulars of that nature have been imparted before this time: You have heard what cruelty *Rupert* exerciſed on the Townſmen, how many he ſeized on in one night, beſide other Acts of cruelty, firing the Suburbs and the like, &c. Nor ſhall I tell you of the high termes *Rupert* demanded when we began firſt to Treat; That hee might ſend to the King, that he might march with Armes, Ordnance, Colours flying, &c. For this I believe you have heard too. Indeed the Noble Generall Sir *Thomas Fairfax* (whom God hath bleſſed with ſo many accompliſhments both Morall and Military, as well as Chriſtian) though alwayes active in promoting that ſervice committed to him; would yet, if poſſible (for the ſparing of ſo much innocent blood as in a Storme would unavoydable be ſpilt) have prevented the effuſion of it, by offering termes of Treaty before any aſſault of that nature made; But *Rupert*, (one that hath ill requited the courteſies done him and the Family whereof he is a branch, by this Nation) delighting rather in deſtruction of innocents then termes of mercy (ſo that he may but ſecure his own perſon) reſolved rather on other termes, and would rather (as appeared after by his attemps) burne a City of that eminence, then ſuffer it to be reſtored to liberty, from that bondage and tyranny which he had exerciſed over it.

When it appeared that Treaties were like to doe no good, the Noble Generall reſolved to attempt by force that which faire offers would not effect: and there-

therfore reſolved on a Storm, which accordingly was performed with a great deal of gallantry both in himſelf and his ſouldiers. Wedneſday morning about three aclock the ſtorming began, and was performed with much reſolution on all parts of the Town, though not in all with the ſame ſucceſſe. The *Clubmen* alſo, who were come in to Sir *Thomas* in great numbers, did good ſervice in it; particularly on the Fort cald *Prior-Fort*; at firſt aſſaulting of it they were beat back, with the loſſe, as I am told, of twelve men; but when they ſaw Sir *Thomas* his ſouldiers take thoſe parts they were employd on, they fell on with a new reſolution, and carried it, and in revenge of thoſe they had formerly loſt, ſlew fifty of thoſe in the Fort. Thoſe on that ſide where Colonell *Welden* aſſaulted (though I heard not of any miſcarriage or wart of valour in the aſſault) did not enter the works. But (to ſpare particulars that I be not tedious) after ſome houres hot diſpute, our men entred the works and became maſters of above halfe the Town. The Souldiers were very loth to hearken to any termes of treaty, when they were in ſo faire a way of taking it by force, that ſo they might have had him whom they could hardly afford longer life to doe more miſchiefe. But *Rupert* being pent up, and not knowing how to eſcape unleſſe upon compoſition, reſolv'd if he might not have quarter, to fire the Town (as he had before done the Suburbs) and accordingly fired it in three places. Sir *Thomas* out of his noble Reſolutions, rather then to ſee ſo brave a Town burnt

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to aſhes and deſtroyed, perſwaded his ſouldiers to be willing that *Rupert* might have quarter, and ſo to redeem the lives of many innocents, who were like otherwiſe to have periſhed, by ſuffering him for the preſent to eſcape that deſerved to periſh, till the hand of God in his owne time ſhall finde him out. And accordingly upon treaty it was agreed, That *Rupert* with the Nobility and Gentry that were in the Town, and the chief Commanders (I am told there are nine Biſhops and eleven Lords among them) ſhould march out; and two hundred Horſe with armes and powder; ſo many of his ſouldiers as will to follow him with their ſwords only: That hee ſhould have twelve wagons (if I miſtake not the number) to carry away ſuch things as are properly his own; but no Ordnance: That he ſhould have a Convoy for fifty miles which way he will, which he is to march in ſeven dayes, and to have free quarter all the way: They are to march out this Thurſday morning. The Town, Caſtle, Ordnance, Armes, &c. to be delivered to Sir *Thomas Fairfax*: And the Town to be preſerved in its Priviledges and Immunities as other Townes are that are in obedience to the Parliament. Which way *Rupert* will march I cannot yet inform you, whether towards *Exeter* or *Worceſter*, but I beleeve rather to *Worceſter* towards the King. Sir *Thomas Fairfax*, I beleeve, will not ſuffer the body of his Army to go into the Town, partly for that he delights not in lying ſtill, and partly becauſe of the Infection in the Town, which will be

be dangerous for the Army. Its thought he will ſuddenly move towards *Exeter*, but of that we ſhall in a few dayes know more.

Thus Sir I have endeavoured to give you ſome account of the Surrender of *Briſtoll*, as in haſte I could; ſome particulars poſſibly I may have miſtaken in, but I have not willingly miſ-related any thing. The Lord teach us all to ſee and prize aright his goodneſſe towards us, that hath ſo mightily, even to admiration, proſpered our Armies of late, and done ſo great things by them. God grant that we may, as we ought, ſee his hand in it, and not think an arme of fleſh able without him to doe any thing. If we dote too much upon the inſtruments, its the way to make them but unſerviceable to us; for God loves not they ſhould have what is his due: yet are we to bleſſe God that hee is pleaſed to uſe them for our good, and to glorifie himſelfe by them. And if thus we doe, we ſhall ſtrengthen them to do more.

Sir, I cannot but the more think of the greatneſſe of this mercy in regaining it; becauſe of that ſadneſſe which poſſeſſed the whole Kingdome at the loſſe of it; when all faces were diſmayed, all heads hanging downe, and all knees feeble, which ſad face of things is even ſtill before my eyes. The Lord grant that we may now but be as much

enlarged

enlarged to praiſe him for this mercy, as we were diſmayed with the loſſe.

Sir, I pray preſent my ſervice to —— and if he have not better intelligence, acquaint him, if you think fit, with this from

Thurſday morning
*Sept.*11. 1645.

Your faithfull friend and humble ſervant

FINIS.